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whip had no terrors for the man who must either tramp or starve. The result was the celebrated Acts imposing a compulsory poor-rate and requiring the able-bodied man to be set on work. The Privy Council, alert to prevent disorder, drove lethargic justices hard, and down to the Civil War the system was administered with fair regularity. But the Elizabethan Poor Law was never designed to be what, with disastrous results, it became in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the sole measure for coping with economic distress. While it provided relief, it was but the last link in a chain of measures—the prevention of evictions, the control of food supplies and prices, the attempt to stabilize employment and to check unnecessary dismissals of workmen—intended to mitigate the forces which made relief necessary. Apart from the Poor Law, the first forty years of the seventeenth century were prolific in the private charity which founded alms-houses and hospitals, and established funds to provide employment or to aid struggling tradesmen. The appeal was still to religion, which owed to poverty a kind of reverence.

It was Thy choice, whilst Thou on earth didst stay,
And hadst not whereupon Thy head to lay.^{us}

" What, speak you of such things ? ^M said Nicholas

Ferrar on his death-bed to one who commended his charities; " it would have been but a suitable return for me to have given all I had, and not to have scattered a few crumbs of alms here and there.^{11 m}

It was inevitable that, in the anarchy of the Civil War, both private charity and public relief should fall on evil days. In London, charitable endowments seem to have suffered from more than ordinary malversation, and there were complaints that the income both of Bridewell and of the Hospitals was seriously reduced,**1

In the country, the records of Quarter Sessions paint a picture of confusion, in which the machinery of present-